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An embodiment of the present invention provides a system and method for adaptive video decoding. A method for adaptive video decoding includes determining whether a resource constrained mode is to be initiated, and responsive to a determination that the resource constrained mode is to be initiated, initiating the resource constrained mode, including foregoing the decoding of portions of received video input. For example, adaptive video decoding may include foregoing the decompression and reconstruction of selected video frames during intervals of high demand for memory and/or bus bandwidth resources.